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Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia

Experimental weekly estimates on the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on payroll jobs and wages, sourced from Single Touch Payroll data

Reference period Week ending 16 January 2021

Released 2/02/2021

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Key statistics

Payroll jobs and total wages both increased by 1.3%, between the weeks ending 2 January 2021 and 16 January 2021.

Over this period, payroll jobs had the largest increases in:

- Queensland (up 2.8%) and South Australia (up 2.4%)
- Manufacturing (up 6.5%) and Construction (up 5.9%)

Age derivation updated

The method used to determine age has been revised for this release, resulting in updated age group indexes. This update is part of an ongoing review which seeks to improve the quality of payroll job and job holder characteristics. For more information, see the Age derivation update subsection of [Data limitations and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-16-january-2021#data-limitations-and-revisions\)](#).

National

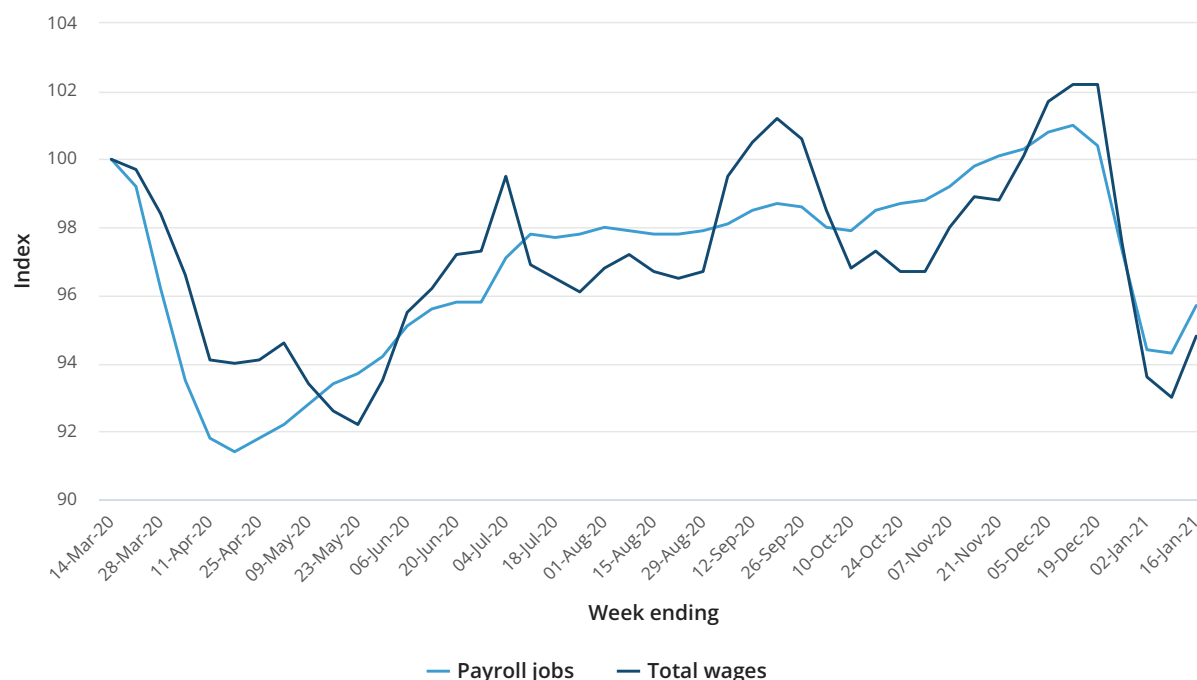
Between the week ending 14 March 2020 and the week ending 16 January 2021:

- Payroll jobs decreased by 4.3%
- Total wages decreased by 5.2%

Between the week ending 2 January 2021 and the week ending 16 January 2021:

- Payroll jobs increased by 1.3%, compared to a decrease of 5.9% in the previous fortnight
- Total wages paid increased by 1.3%, compared to a decrease of 8.4% in the previous fortnight

Graph 1 - Payroll jobs and total wages, indexed to the week ending 14 March 2020 (a)



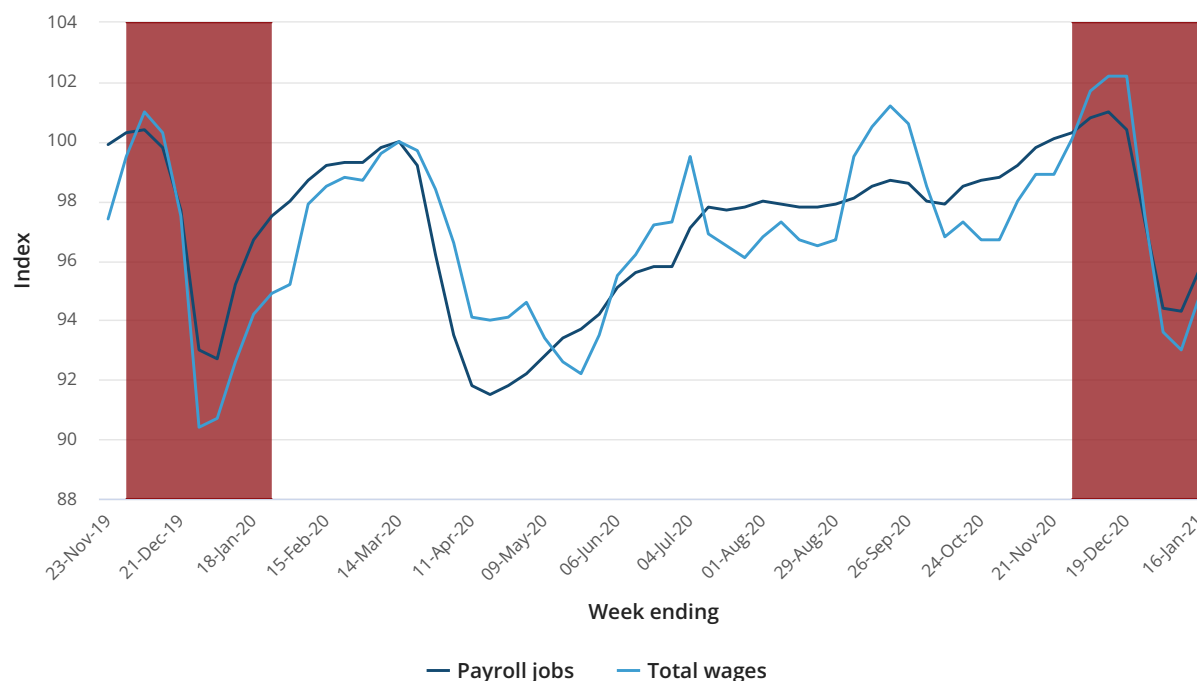
a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs and wages. For more information, please see [Data limitations and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-16-january-2021#data-limitations-and-revisions\)](#). Weekly change data are available in the Data downloads.

Year-end data variability

The movement in the Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages series observed between late November 2020 and early January 2021, is consistent with labour market seasonality at year-end. Estimates may also be affected by modified business reporting of STP data over this period. The underlying movement at year-end in both payroll jobs and wages, will be somewhat hidden by these effects until 'normal' business reporting resumes.

The following graph highlights the similarity in the payroll jobs and wages index movement over this period in 2019 and 2020, by using previously unreleased data for 2019.

Graph 2 - Payroll jobs and total wages, indexed to the week ending 14



a. Data for 2019 are presented for visual comparison only, as they have not been fully quality assured and may be affected by under-coverage and year-end reporting variability.

Seasonal variation in the labour market

The Australian labour market has a period of pronounced seasonality from December through to January due to:

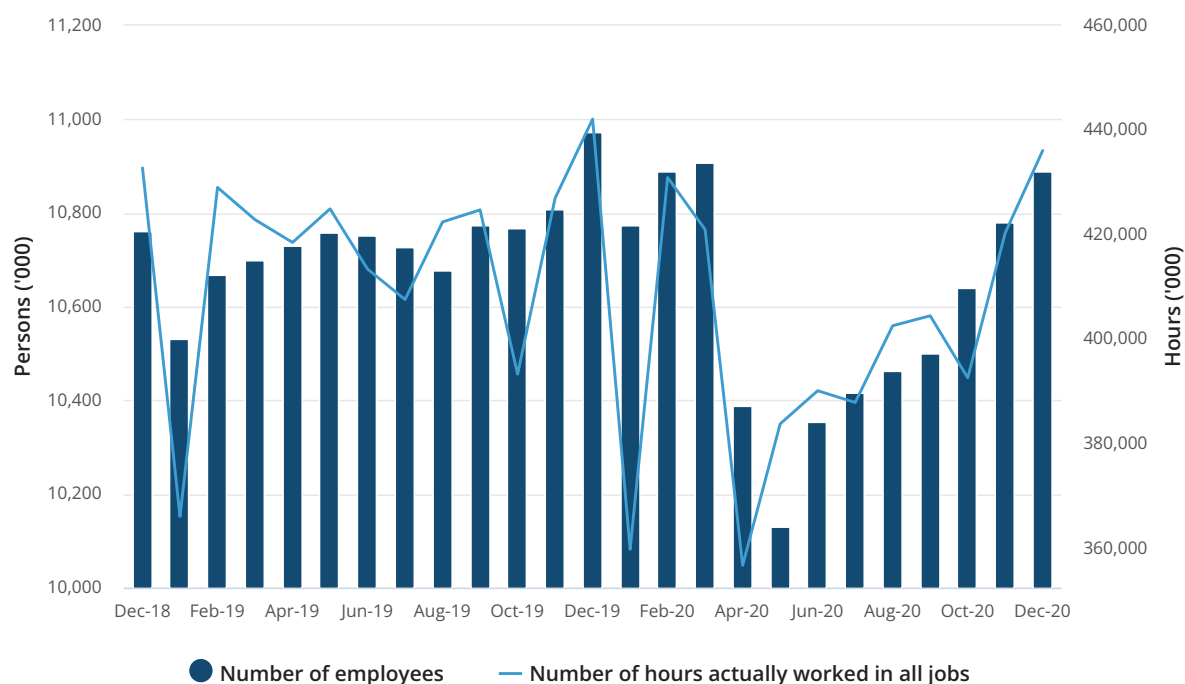
- increases in labour market activity before Christmas; and
- a combination of public holidays, school holidays and lower business activity (in many industries) in the period after Christmas.

Estimates currently presented in the Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia release are an 'original' data series and are not yet able to be produced with seasonal impacts removed (i.e. seasonally adjusted).

However, there are other labour statistics which are seasonally adjusted, which may provide further context in interpreting data in this release. For example, the original Labour Force

series shows a regular seasonal fall in January each year, in both the number of employees and weekly hours worked.

Graph 3 – Number of employees and number of hours worked - Labour Force (original)



Source: [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release\)](#)

Seasonal reporting variability

A payroll job is a relationship between an employer and their employing enterprise. A payroll job is counted in any given reference week when an employee is paid in that week (through STP-enabled payroll or accounting software and reported to the ATO) or an established payment pattern has enabled the inclusion of payroll jobs paid in weeks outside of the reference period.

Therefore, modified STP reporting while some businesses have reduced activity, can temporarily impact estimates of payroll jobs and their associated wages. However, when businesses resume 'normal' reporting patterns in early 2021, year-end

estimates in future releases will subsequently be updated and revised. Some businesses report more variably at year-end than others, and may result in higher than usual levels of revision for both payroll jobs and wages when updated. For more information, see the Year-end reporting section of [Data limitations and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-16-january-2021#data-limitations-and-revisions\)](#).

State and territory

Since the week ending 14 March 2020 the largest changes across states and territories were:

- Payroll jobs : Victoria decreased by 5.9% and the Australian Capital Territory decreased by 4.8%
- Total wages : New South Wales decreased by 6.4% and Western Australia decreased by 6.3%

Between the week ending 2 January 2021 and 16 January 2021 the largest changes across states and territories were:

- Payroll jobs : Queensland increased by 2.8% and South Australia increased by 2.4%
- Total wages : Western Australia increased by 3.7% and Queensland increased by 3.0%

Table 1 - Percentage change by states and territories

	Payroll jobs		Total wages	
	Change between 2 Jan 2021 and 16 Jan 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 16 Jan 2021	Change between 2 Jan 2021 and 16 Jan 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 16 Jan 2021
New South Wales	0.7%	-4.6%	0.1%	-6.4%
Victoria	0.7%	-5.9%	0.1%	-4.5%
Queensland	2.8%	-4.0%	3.0%	-4.5%
South Australia	2.4%	-2.4%	2.8%	-3.2%
Western Australia	1.3%	-1.3%	3.7%	-6.3%
Tasmania	2.0%	-3.5%	2.9%	-2.8%
Northern Territory	0.5%	-2.6%	1.3%	-1.3%
Australian Capital Territory	1.0%	-4.8%	0.6%	-4.5%
Australia	1.3%	-4.3%	1.3%	-5.2%

a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs and wages. For more information, please see [Data limitations and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-16-january-2021#data-limitations-and-revisions\)](#). Weekly change data are available in Data downloads.

Sub-state - payroll jobs

Time series estimates of payroll jobs by sub-state regions, Statistical Area 4 (SA4) and Statistical Area 3 (SA3), are presented as index values through to the week ending 2 January 2021 in Table 5 of the Data downloads.

SA4 regions are specifically designed to reflect labour markets within each state and territory within population limits. In regional areas, SA4s tend to have lower populations (100,000 to 300,000), while in metropolitan areas, SA4s tend to have larger populations (300,000 to 500,000).

SA3 regions generally have populations between 30,000 and 130,000 persons. They are often the functional areas of regional towns and cities with a population in excess of 20,000, or clusters of related suburbs around urban commercial and transport hubs within the major urban areas.

For more information see [Statistical Geography \(https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Geography\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/Geography); [Australian Statistical Geography Standard, Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2016 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.001\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.001); or [Australian Statistical Geography Standard, Volume 3 - Non-ABS Structures, July 2018 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.003\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.003).

Interactive maps

Interactive maps presenting change in payroll jobs by sub-state regions (SA4 and SA3) up to the week ending 26 December 2020 are found in this [link \(https://absstats.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=cd4fbdf3c39f496c830fccdd084fbac2\)](https://absstats.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=cd4fbdf3c39f496c830fccdd084fbac2). The interactive maps are updated in alternate fortnightly releases, to coincide with the update of sub-state region estimates.

How to use:

- Select: Geographical area can be selected using the Statistical Area 3 (SA3) or Statistical Area 4 (SA4) upper tabs.
- Search: the magnifying glass icon opens the search function. It is set to look for locations such as addresses, suburbs and postcodes contained within an SA4 or SA3 region.
- Reference week: the date slider at the bottom of the map can be moved to select a particular week of interest, or see changes over time.
- Data: on the relevant map, an SA4 or SA3 can be selected to view the underlying data. The time series index estimates for SA4 and SA3s can be found in Table 5 of the Data downloads.
- If the maps do not load successfully, please try refreshing the page.

SA4 and SA3 boundaries presented in the interactive maps accord with those presented in

the [Australian Statistical Geography Standard, Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2016](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.001) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.001>).

Sex

Since the week ending 14 March 2020:

- Payroll jobs : Those worked by males decreased by 6.0% and those worked by females decreased by 5.2%
- Total wages : Payments to males decreased by 7.8% and payments to females decreased by 2.8%

Between the week ending 2 January 2021 and the week ending 16 January 2021:

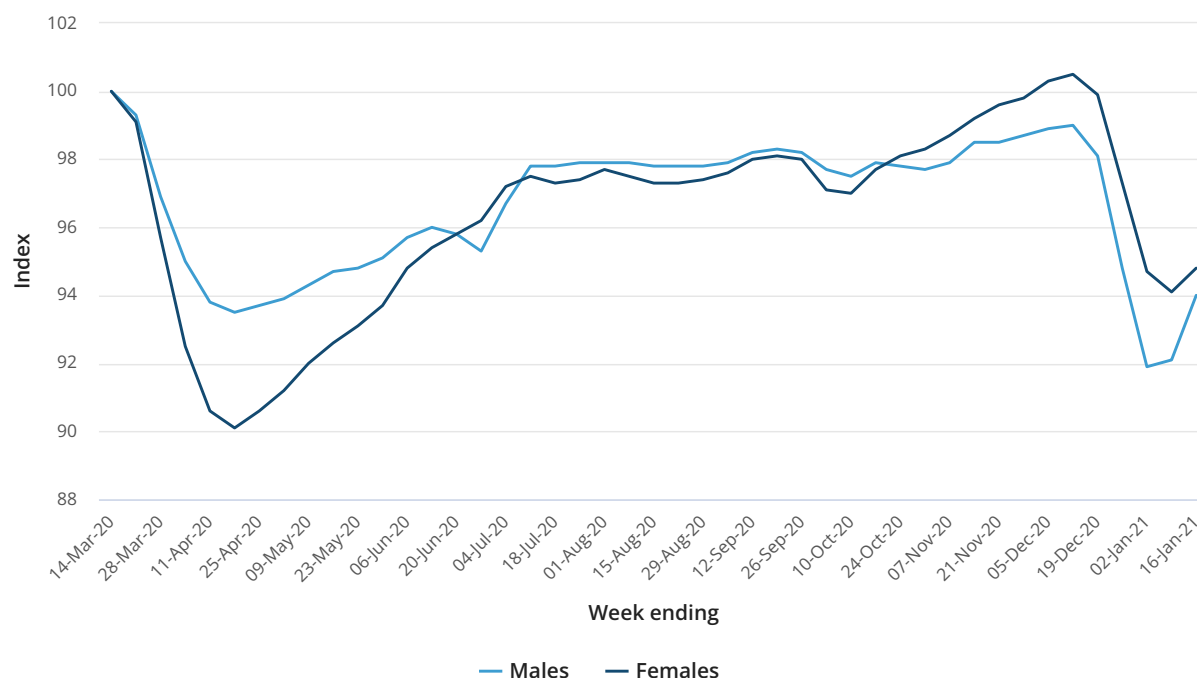
- Payroll jobs : Those worked by males increased by 2.3% and those worked by females decreased by 0.1%
- Total wages : Payments to males decreased by 2.8% and payments to females decreased by 0.9%

Table 2 - Percentage change by sex

	Payroll jobs		Total wages	
	Change between 2 Jan 2021 and 16 Jan 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 16 Jan 2021	Change between 2 Jan 2021 and 16 Jan 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 16 Jan 2021
Males	2.3%	-6.0%	2.8%	-7.8%
Females	0.1%	-5.2%	-0.9%	-2.8%
All persons	1.3%	-4.3%	1.3%	-5.2%

a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs and wages. For more information, please see [Data limitations and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-16-january-2021#data-limitations-and-revisions\)](#). Weekly change data are available in the Data downloads.

Graph 4 - Payroll jobs by sex, indexed to the week ending 14 March 2020 (a)



a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs. For more information, please see [Data limitations and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-16-january-2021#data-limitations-and-revisions\)](#). Weekly change data are available in the Data downloads section.

Age group

The method used to determine age has been revised for this release, resulting in updated age group indexes. This update particularly impacts the time series of the youngest (aged 15-19 years) and oldest (aged 70 years and over) persons age groups. The ABS recommends that analyses of previously published age group estimates be refreshed with the data from this release. For more detail, see the Age derivation update subsection of [Data limitations and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-16-january-2021#data-limitations-and-revisions\)](#).

From this release, persons 'aged under 20 years' were renamed '15-19 year olds' to more accurately reflect the population of the age group.

Since the week ending 14 March 2020 the largest changes across age groups were:

- Payroll jobs : Those worked by people aged 20-29 decreased by 6.5% and those worked by people aged 15-19 decreased by 4.4%
- Total wages : Payments to people aged 40-49 decreased by 6.9% and payments to people aged 30-39 decreased by 5.2%

Between the week ending 2 January 2021 and the week ending 16 January 2021 the largest changes across age groups were:

- Payroll jobs : Those worked by people aged 15-19 increased by 5.3% and those worked by people aged 70 years and over decreased by 2.7%
- Total wages : Payments to people aged 70 years and over decreased by 2.9% and payments to people aged 20-29 increased by 2.3%

Table 3 - Percentage change by age group

	Payroll jobs		Total wages	
	Change between 2 Jan 2021 and 16 Jan 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 16 Jan 2021	Change between 2 Jan 2021 and 16 Jan 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 16 Jan 2021
15-19 year olds (b)	5.3%	-4.4%	0.6%	4.0%
20-29 year olds	1.7%	-6.5%	2.3%	-4.9%
30-39 year olds	1.3%	-3.2%	1.8%	-5.2%
40-49 year olds	1.2%	-3.1%	1.2%	-6.9%
50-59 year olds	1.3%	-2.0%	1.2%	-4.6%
60-69 year olds	0.2%	-0.3%	-0.3%	0.0%
Aged 70 years and over	-2.7%	-3.2%	-2.9%	2.8%
All persons	1.3%	-4.3%	1.3%	-5.2%

a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs and wages. For more information, please see [Data limitations and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-16-january-2021#data-limitations-and-revisions\)](#). Weekly change data are available in Data downloads.

b. From this release, persons aged under 20 years were renamed to more accurately reflect the population of the age group.

Industry

Since the week ending 14 March 2020 the largest changes across industry were:

- Payroll jobs : Accommodation and food services decreased by 14.7% and Education and training decreased by 13.8%
- Total wages : Mining decreased by 23.5% and Information media and telecommunications decreased by 12.2%

Between the week ending 2 January 2021 and the week ending 16 January 2021 the largest changes across industry were:

- Payroll jobs : Manufacturing increased by 6.5% and Construction increased by 5.9%
- Total wages : Administrative and support services increased by 12.1% and Construction increased by 11.3%

Table 4 - Percentage change by industry

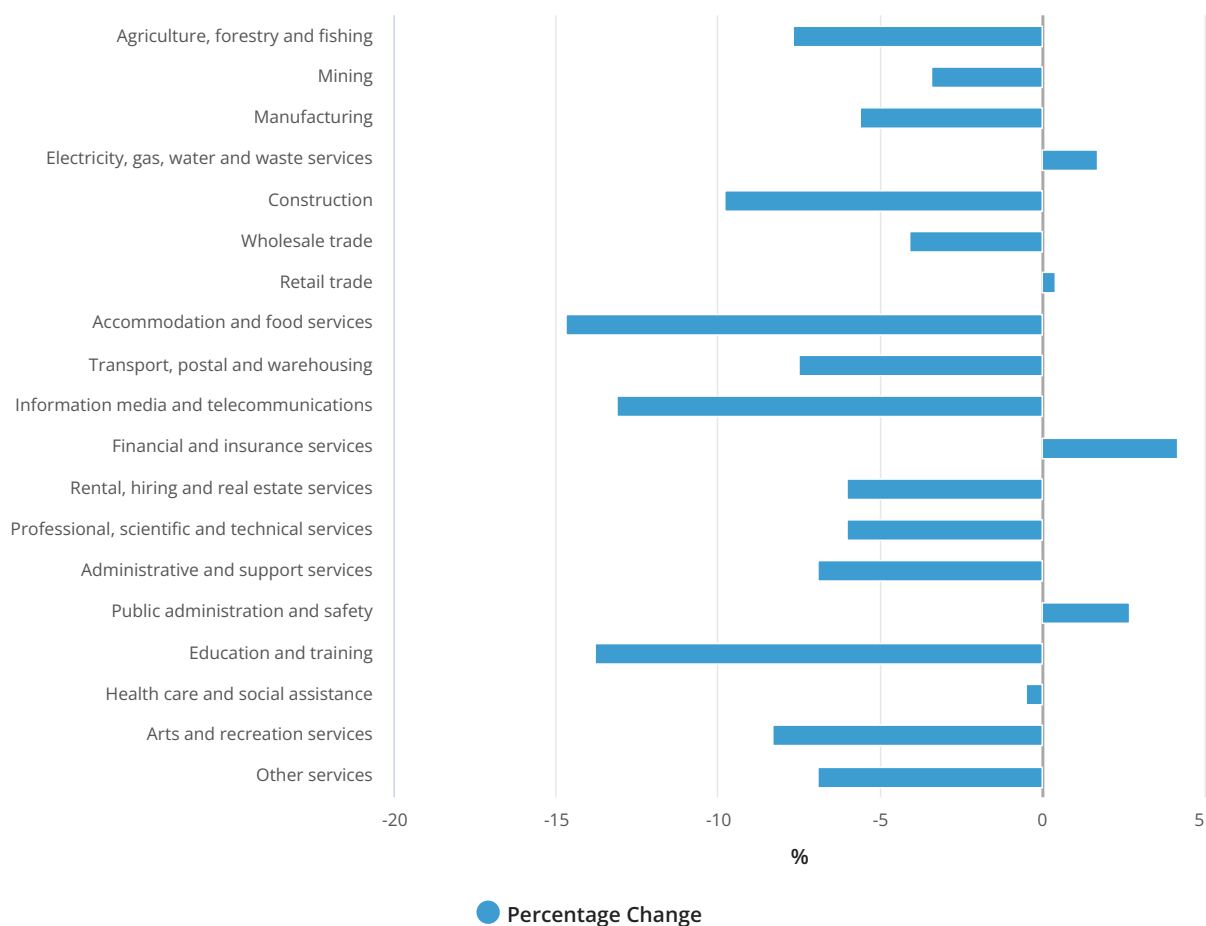
	Payroll jobs		Total wages	
	Change between 2 Jan 2021 and 16 Jan 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 16 Jan 2021	Change between 2 Jan 2021 and 16 Jan 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 16 Jan 2021
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	-0.9%	-7.7%	1.6%	-3.2%
Mining (b)(c)	1.4%	-3.4%	2.9%	-23.5%
Manufacturing	6.5%	-5.6%	5.7%	-9.1%
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	1.9%	1.7%	0.7%	-0.2%
Construction	5.9%	-9.8%	11.3%	-10.8%
Wholesale trade	2.0%	-4.1%	0.1%	-11.6%
Retail trade	1.0%	0.4%	-2.9%	0.3%
Accommodation and food services	1.4%	-14.7%	-7.1%	-12.0%
Transport, postal and warehousing	1.4%	-7.5%	2.0%	-9.8%
Information media and telecommunications (c)	2.2%	-13.1%	2.1%	-12.2%
Financial and insurance services	1.5%	4.2%	0.5%	-7.4%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	1.5%	-6.0%	1.4%	-4.7%
Professional, scientific and technical services (c)	0.6%	-6.0%	0.0%	-6.3%
Administrative and support services	5.4%	-6.9%	12.1%	-7.6%
Public administration and safety	0.0%	2.7%	-0.1%	1.5%
Education and training	-4.6%	-13.8%	-3.0%	-6.8%
Health care and social assistance (c)	-0.6%	-0.5%	-2.1%	3.1%
Arts and recreation services (c)	0.6%	-8.3%	-0.7%	-4.5%
Other services	1.3%	-6.9%	2.6%	-0.9%
All industries	1.3%	-4.3%	1.3%	-5.2%

a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs and wages. Weekly change data are available in Data downloads.

b. The Mining industry wages estimates in March and September may include annual bonuses. Please refer to the seasonality section in [Data limitations and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-16-january-2021#data-limitations-and-revisions\)](#) for further information.

c. Some businesses report more variably at year-end, resulting in higher than usual levels of imputation in these industries. For more information, see [Data limitations and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-16-january-2021#data-limitations-and-revisions\)](#).

Graph 5 - Percentage change in payroll jobs by Industry between 14 March 2020 and 16 January 2021



Industry subdivision - Payroll jobs

Updated estimates of payroll jobs by industry subdivision, were added to this release on Wednesday 3 February 2021.

Time series estimates of payroll jobs by industry subdivision (presented as index values) up to the week ending 16 January 2021 are available in Table 6 of the Data downloads.

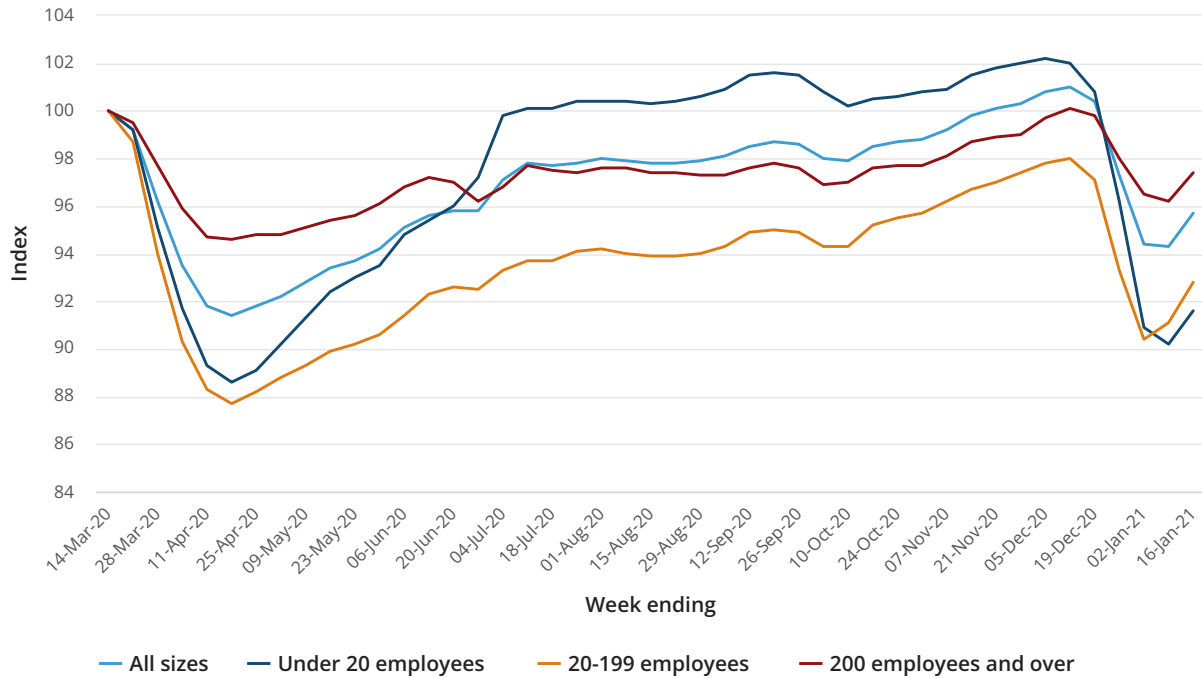
The subdivision level is the second broadest grouping of industries within the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0). Industry subdivisions are built up from the industry groups which, in turn, are built up from industry classes.

Employment size

The following experimental estimates present payroll jobs by employment size between the week ending 14 March 2020 and the week ending 16 January 2021.

Care should be exercised when focusing on recent movements in payroll jobs by employment size, as they are subject to higher than usual levels of revision (over a longer period) than other estimates. As part of the updating of additional data sources, the ABS is investigating underlying data to identify the cause and establish a method to reduce the future level of revisions in this series.

Graph 6 - Payroll jobs by employment size, indexed to the week ending 14 March 2020 (a)



a. Care should be exercised when focusing on recent movements in payroll jobs. For more information, see the Reporting variability section in [Data limitations and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-16-january-2021#data-limitations-and-revisions\)](#).

Table 5 - Percentage change in Payroll jobs by state and territory, by employment size as at 14 March 2020

		Change between 2 Jan 2021 and 16 Jan 2021 (a)	Change between 14 Mar 2020 and 16 Jan 2021
Under 20 employees		0.7%	-8.4%
	New South Wales	-0.4%	-10.5%
	Victoria	-1.4%	-10.3%
	Queensland	4.0%	-6.5%
	South Australia	3.3%	-3.8%
	Western Australia	1.5%	-3.7%
	Tasmania	2.4%	-5.7%
	Northern Territory	1.3%	-6.3%
	Australian Capital Territory	-0.2%	-9.7%
20-199 employees		2.6%	-7.2%
	New South Wales	2.9%	-7.5%
	Victoria	1.8%	-9.3%
	Queensland	4.0%	-5.9%
	South Australia	2.8%	-5.9%
	Western Australia	2.2%	-4.1%
	Tasmania	1.2%	-7.7%
	Northern Territory	0.6%	-6.2%
	Australian Capital Territory	1.0%	-9.8%
200 employees and over		1.0%	-2.6%
	New South Wales	0.3%	-2.1%
	Victoria	1.3%	-3.3%
	Queensland	1.5%	-4.0%
	South Australia	1.6%	-1.4%
	Western Australia	1.0%	-0.7%
	Tasmania	2.1%	-1.7%
	Northern Territory	0.1%	-0.1%
	Australian Capital Territory	1.3%	-2.6%

a. Care should be exercised when focusing on the most recent movements in payroll jobs. For more information, please see [Data limitations and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-16-january-2021#data-limitations-and-revisions\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/dossbytitle/AC79D33ED6045E88CA25706E0074E77A?OpenDocument).

Employment size source

Employment size variables were determined from [ABS Business Register \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/dossbytitle/AC79D33ED6045E88CA25706E0074E77A?OpenDocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/dossbytitle/AC79D33ED6045E88CA25706E0074E77A?OpenDocument) data. The ABS Business Register is populated using administrative data from the Australian Business Register (ABR) and business data from the Australian Tax Office (ATO). Data on the structures of large and complex businesses are also collected by ABS. The ABS Business Register is updated regularly and a frame of business, containing business characteristic information, is

produced quarterly for use in the production of statistics.

The March 2020 quarterly frame was used to determine employment size for businesses reporting their payroll via STP and subsequently allocate their reported payroll jobs against. Once a payroll job is allocated to an employment size category, it is held constant against that category over time. By using the March 2020 quarter frame and holding employment size categorisation constant, the ABS is able to present information about the change in payroll jobs based on the employment size of businesses before Australia recorded its 100th confirmed COVID-19 case on 14 March 2020.

Businesses which are newly created after March 2020 are unable to be assigned a size and are subsequently excluded from the index calculation of employment size groups. These 'new' businesses are included in the calculation of all sizes category (for state and territory, and national level estimates). The number of STP reporting businesses 'born' since Australia recorded its 100th confirmed COVID-19 in March 2020 is considered small, hence their exclusion is expected to have minimal impact on the estimates. The ABS exploring how to incorporate newly created businesses into the employment size estimates and may include them in a future release.

Data downloads

Table 1: National spotlight

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[87.04 KB]

Table 2: State and territory spotlight

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[411.86 KB]

Table 3: Industry spotlight

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[711.95 KB]

Table 4: Payroll jobs and wages indexes

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[2.49 MB]

Table 5: Sub-state - Payroll jobs indexes

Estimates of payroll jobs by Statistical Area 4 (SA4) and Statistical Area 3 (SA3) to the week ending 2 January 2021, as updated on Wednesday 20 January 2021.

[↓ Download XLSX](#)
[212.89 KB]

Table 6: Industry subdivision - Payroll jobs index

Estimates of payroll jobs by industry subdivision to the week ending 16 January 2021, as updated on Wednesday 3 February 2021.

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[71.47 KB]

Table 7: Employment size - Payroll jobs index

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[46.68 KB]

All data cubes

Updated to include Table 6 as released on Wednesday 3 February 2021.

[↓ Download ZIP](#)

[2.79 MB]

Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 6160.0.55.001.

Changes in this release

From this release, persons 'aged under 20 years' were renamed '15-19 year olds' to more accurately reflect the population of the age group.

The following sections of the Methodology have been updated in this release:

- How data are processed: Accruing end of year financial payments (moved from Data limitations and revisions)
- Data limitations and revisions: Week on week revisions; Methods review (previously Update of characteristics variables); Age derivation update; and Year-end reporting.

Post-release changes

3 February 2021: Industry subdivision - Payroll jobs indexes (Table 6 of the Data downloads) were updated to the week ending 16 January 2021.

Methodology

[Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia methodology, Week ending 16 January 2021](#)